

HEALTH BENEFITS E-NEWS

*Department of Human Resource Management
Office of Health Benefits*

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Employee Assistance Program Offers Resources For Coping with Hurricane Aftermath

Some state health plan members may have family along the Gulf Coast and others may want more information on helping colleagues with family affected by Hurricane Katrina deal with the challenges they face. The Employee Assistance Program has a number of resources, from information on dealing emotionally with effects of the hurricane to dealing with stress and helping children handle anxiety related to the disaster. Visit the ValueOptions Web site front page at www.achievesolutions.net/covacare and click on "Hurricane Response Member Assistance" under Resources.

U.S. Postal Service Standard Required For Data Address Fields

Invalid or incomplete addresses are resulting in a large amount of return mail to DHRM and its vendors. Beginning October 1, DHRM will phase in use of the U.S. Postal Service standard for PMIS and BES address fields, requiring the ZIP+4 code. To determine the correct address format, visit the USPS Web site at <http://zip4.usps.com/zip4/welcome.jsp> and enter the address. Follow these steps:

- Cut/paste the reformatted address line from the Web site to PMIS/BES.
- Enter the proper ZIP and ZIP+4 codes from the Web site to PMIS/BES.
- Do not attempt to "fix" a verified address (unless the employee has moved).
- Do not use a "#" but enter APT, STE, LOT, TRLR, etc. instead.
- Always verify the address format the employee entered on the form.

Revised Health Benefits Systems Guide Posted on DHRM Web Site

A revised and updated version of the BES Instructions Guide, renamed the Systems Guide for Health Benefits Administrators, is posted on the DHRM Web site at www.dhrm.virginia.gov under Compensation and Benefits, Resources for Benefits Administrators, Handbooks and Manuals, Health Benefits Systems Guide.

Provide Medicare Part D Information to New Medicare-Eligible Retiree Group Participants

As employees plan for retirement or start long-term disability in the coming months, all Benefits Administrators should be aware that the availability of Medicare Part D, the new Medicare prescription drug benefit, will have an impact on health plan elections made by Medicare-eligible retirees, survivors and LTD participants (and their Medicare-eligible dependents) for January 1, 2006. If they are eligible and elect retiree group coverage in the state program, those new participants should be provided with informational materials to assist them in making an informed decision about their health plan coverage for 2006.

Election of retiree group health coverage that has been keyed into BES by October 17, regardless of the effective date, should automatically generate information regarding Medicare Part D, and no additional action will be required on your part. However, any transfer to the retiree group keyed into BES after October 17 will require that you provide the participant with information explaining the options available January 1 regarding Medicare Part D. The information will be sent to you in early November.

If you have new Medicare-eligible retirees, survivors or LTD participants (or their covered Medicare-eligible dependents) during the periods noted above, please be looking for additional resources in early November. If you need information prior to that time, send your questions to hbp@dhrm.virginia.gov.